

Patent No. 3,887,699, EP 158,277A, Canadian Patent No. 1176565, U. Sidman *et al.*, *Biopolymers* 22, 547 [1983], and R. Langer *et al.*, *Chem. Tech.* 12, 98 [1982].

When applied topically, the VEGF-E is suitably combined with other ingredients, such as carriers and/or adjuvants. There are no limitations on the nature of such other ingredients, except that they must be pharmaceutically acceptable and efficacious for their intended administration, and cannot degrade the activity of the active ingredients of the composition. Examples of suitable vehicles include ointments, creams, gels, or suspensions, with or without purified collagen. The compositions also may be impregnated into transdermal patches, plasters, and bandages, preferably in liquid or semi-liquid form.

For obtaining a gel formulation, the VEGF-E formulated in a liquid composition may be mixed with an effective amount of a water-soluble polysaccharide or synthetic polymer such as polyethylene glycol to form a gel of the proper viscosity to be applied topically. The polysaccharide that may be used includes, for example, cellulose derivatives such as etherified cellulose derivatives, including alkyl celluloses, hydroxyalkyl celluloses, and alkylhydroxyalkyl celluloses, for example, methylcellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, and hydroxypropyl cellulose; starch and fractionated starch; agar; alginic acid and alginates; gum arabic; pullullan; agarose; carrageenan; dextrans; dextrans; fructans; inulin; mannans; xylans; arabinans; chitosans; glycogens; glucans; and synthetic biopolymers; as well as gums such as xanthan gum; guar gum; locust bean gum; gum arabic; tragacanth gum; and karaya gum; and derivatives and mixtures thereof. The preferred gelling agent herein is one that is inert to biological systems, nontoxic, simple to prepare, and not too runny or viscous, and will not destabilize the VEGF-E held within it.

Preferably the polysaccharide is an etherified cellulose derivative, more preferably one that is well defined, purified, and listed in USP, e.g., methylcellulose and the hydroxyalkyl cellulose derivatives, such as hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, and hydroxypropyl methylcellulose. Most preferred herein is methylcellulose.

The polyethylene glycol useful for gelling is typically a mixture of low and high molecular weight polyethylene glycols to obtain the proper viscosity. For example, a mixture of a polyethylene glycol of molecular weight 400-600 with one of molecular weight 1500 would be effective for this purpose when mixed in the proper ratio to obtain a paste.

The term "water soluble" as applied to the polysaccharides and polyethylene glycols is meant to include colloidal solutions and dispersions. In general, the solubility of the cellulose derivatives is determined by the degree of substitution of ether groups, and the stabilizing derivatives useful herein should have a sufficient quantity of such ether groups per anhydroglucose unit in the cellulose chain to render the derivatives water soluble. A degree of ether substitution of at least 0.35 ether groups per anhydroglucose unit is generally sufficient. Additionally, the cellulose derivatives may be in the form of alkali metal salts, for example, the Li, Na, K, or Cs salts.

If methylcellulose is employed in the gel, preferably it comprises about 2-5%, more preferably about 3%, of the gel and the VEGF is present in an amount of about 300-1000 mg per ml of gel.

The dosage to be employed is dependent upon the factors described above. As a general proposition, the VEGF-E is formulated and delivered to the target site or tissue at a dosage capable of establishing in the tissue a VEGF-E level greater than about 0.1 ng/cc up to a maximum dose that is efficacious but not unduly

toxic. This intra-tissue concentration should be maintained if possible by continuous infusion, sustained release, topical application, or injection at empirically determined frequencies.

It is within the scope hereof to combine the VEGF-E therapy with other novel or conventional therapies (e.g., growth factors such as VEGF, aFGF, bFGF, PDGF, IGF, NGF, anabolic steroids, EGF or TGF- α) for enhancing the activity of any of the growth factors, including VEGF-E, in promoting cell proliferation, survival, differentiation and repair. It is not necessary that such cotreatment drugs be included per se in the compositions of this invention, although this will be convenient where such drugs are proteinaceous. Such admixtures are suitably administered in the same manner and for the same purposes as the VEGF-E used alone. The useful molar ratio of VEGF-E to such secondary growth factors is typically 1:0.1-10, with about equimolar amounts being preferred.

The compounds of the present invention can be formulated according to known methods to prepare pharmaceutically useful compositions, whereby the PRO polypeptide hereof is combined in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier vehicle. Suitable carrier vehicles and their formulation, inclusive of other human proteins, e.g., human serum albumin, are described, for example, in *Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 16th ed., 1980, Mack Publishing Co., edited by Oslo *et al.* the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference. The VEGF-E herein may be administered parenterally to subjects suffering from cardiovascular diseases or conditions, or by other methods that ensure its delivery to the bloodstream in an effective form.

Compositions particularly well suited for the clinical administration of VEGF-E hereof employed in the practice of the present invention include, for example, sterile aqueous solutions, or sterile hydratable powders such as lyophilized protein. It is generally desirable to include further in the formulation an appropriate amount of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, generally in an amount sufficient to render the formulation isotonic. A pH regulator such as arginine base, and phosphoric acid, are also typically included in sufficient quantities to maintain an appropriate pH, generally from 5.5 to 7.5. Moreover, for improvement of shelf-life or stability of aqueous formulations, it may also be desirable to include further agents such as glycerol. In this manner, variant t-PA formulations are rendered appropriate for parenteral administration, and, in particular, intravenous administration.

Dosages and desired drug concentrations of pharmaceutical compositions of the present invention may vary depending on the particular use envisioned. For example, in the treatment of deep vein thrombosis or peripheral vascular disease, "bolus" doses, will typically be preferred with subsequent administrations being given to maintain an approximately constant blood level, preferably on the order of about 3 $\mu\text{g/ml}$.

However, for use in connection with emergency medical care facilities where infusion capability is generally not available and due to the generally critical nature of the underlying disease (e.g., embolism, infarct), it will generally be desirable to provide somewhat larger initial doses, such as an intravenous bolus.

For the various therapeutic indications referred to for the compounds hereof, the VEGF-E molecules will be formulated and dosed in a fashion consistent with good medical practice taking into account the specific disorder to be treated, the condition of the individual patient, the site of delivery, the method of administration and other factors known to practitioners in the respective art. Thus, for purposes herein, the "therapeutically effective amount" of the VEGF-E molecules hereof is an amount that is effective either to prevent, lessen the

worsening of, alleviate, or cure the treated condition, in particular that amount which is sufficient to enhance the survival, proliferation or differentiation of targeted cells in vivo. In general a dosage is employed capable of establishing in the tissue that is the target for the therapeutic indication being treated a level of a VEGF-E hereof greater than about 0.1 ng/cm³ up to a maximum dose that is efficacious but not unduly toxic. It is contemplated that intra-tissue administration may be the choice for certain of the therapeutic indications for the compounds hereof.

The human Toll proteins of the present invention can also be used in assays to identify other proteins or molecules involved in Toll-mediated signal transduction. For example, PRO285 and PRO286 are useful in identifying the as of yet unknown natural ligands of human Tolls, or other factors that participate (directly or indirectly) in the activation of and/or signaling through a human Toll receptor, such as potential Toll receptor associated kinases. In addition, inhibitors of the receptor/ligand binding interaction can be identified. Proteins involved in such binding interactions can also be used to screen for peptide or small molecule inhibitors or agonists of the binding interaction. Screening assays can be designed to find lead compounds that mimic the biological activity of a native Toll polypeptide or a ligand for a native Toll polypeptide. Such screening assays will include assays amenable to high-throughput screening of chemical libraries, making them particularly suitable for identifying small molecule drug candidates. Small molecules contemplated include synthetic organic or inorganic compounds. The assays can be performed in a variety of formats, including protein-protein binding assays, biochemical screening assays, immunoassays and cell based assays, which are well characterized in the art.

In vitro assays employ a mixture of components including a Toll receptor polypeptide, which may be part of fusion product with another peptide or polypeptide, e.g., a tag for detecting or anchoring, etc. The assay mixtures may further comprise (for binding assays) a natural intra- or extracellular Toll binding target (i.e. a Toll ligand, or another molecule known to activate and/or signal through the Toll receptor). While native binding targets may be used, it is frequently preferred to use portion of such native binding targets (e.g. peptides), so long as the portion provides binding affinity and avidity to the subject Toll protein conveniently measurable in the assay. The assay mixture also contains a candidate pharmacological agent. Candidate agents encompass numerous chemical classes, through typically they are organic compounds, preferably small organic compounds, and are obtained from a wide variety of sources, including libraries of synthetic or natural compounds. A variety of other reagents may also be included in the mixture, such as, salts, buffers, neutral proteins, e.g. albumin, detergents, protease inhibitors, nuclease inhibitors, antimicrobial agents, etc.

In *in vitro* binding assays, the resultant mixture is incubated under conditions whereby, but for the presence of the candidate molecule, the Toll protein specifically binds the cellular binding target, portion or analog, with a reference binding affinity. The mixture components can be added in any order that provides for the requisite bindings and incubations may be performed at any temperature which facilitates optimal binding. Incubation periods are likewise selected for optimal binding but also minimized to facilitate rapid high-throughput screening.

After incubation, the agent-biased binding between the Toll protein and one or more binding targets is detected by any convenient technique. For cell-free binding type assays, a separation step is often used to separate bound from unbound components. Separation may be effected by precipitation (e.g. TCA precipitation,